



**Department of Justice
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**JURY CONVICTS WOMAN CLAIMING TO STUDY “CRIMINAL JUSTICE”
OF SMUGGLING 7.25 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE**

BROWNSVILLE, TX – A federal jury has found Juana Delia Aguilar, 31, a United States citizen living in Matamoros, Mexico, guilty of conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute 7.25 kilograms of cocaine. The jury's verdict was returned on Monday, April 3, 2006, after two days of trial testimony. United States District Judge Hilda Tagle, who presided over the trial, ordered the defendant held in federal custody without bond pending her sentencing on July 6, 2006.

During the course of the trial, the jury heard testimony that proved that during the evening of January 3, 2006, Aguilar drove her 1994 Crown Victoria into the United States via the B & M International Bridge in Brownsville from Matamoros, Mexico. After a canine alert on her vehicle, Immigration and Customs inspectors discovered 7.25 kilograms of cocaine under the hood of her car. Aguilar was arrested.

Aguilar admitted she owned the 1994 Crown Victoria, but denied knowing about the contraband concealed in her car. Aguilar claimed her boyfriend had borrowed her car briefly the afternoon of her arrest. When inspectors found two photographs of “ZETA” gang members in her billfold, Aguilar claimed the photographs were part of a criminal justice project she was working on. However, evidence was presented showing Aguilar's student identification card had expired in 2004. Agents testified that they found \$790 cash on Aguilar's person at the time of her arrest and receipts that showed she had spent over \$900 cash the day before her arrest. Additionally, Aguilar had claimed her “husband worked at BPD” as an officer, however, this statement was also proven to be false.

Both the conspiracy and the substantive count of conviction each carry a mandatory minimum punishment of 10 years and a maximum of life imprisonment and a maximum \$4 million fine per count.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Oscar Ponce.

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